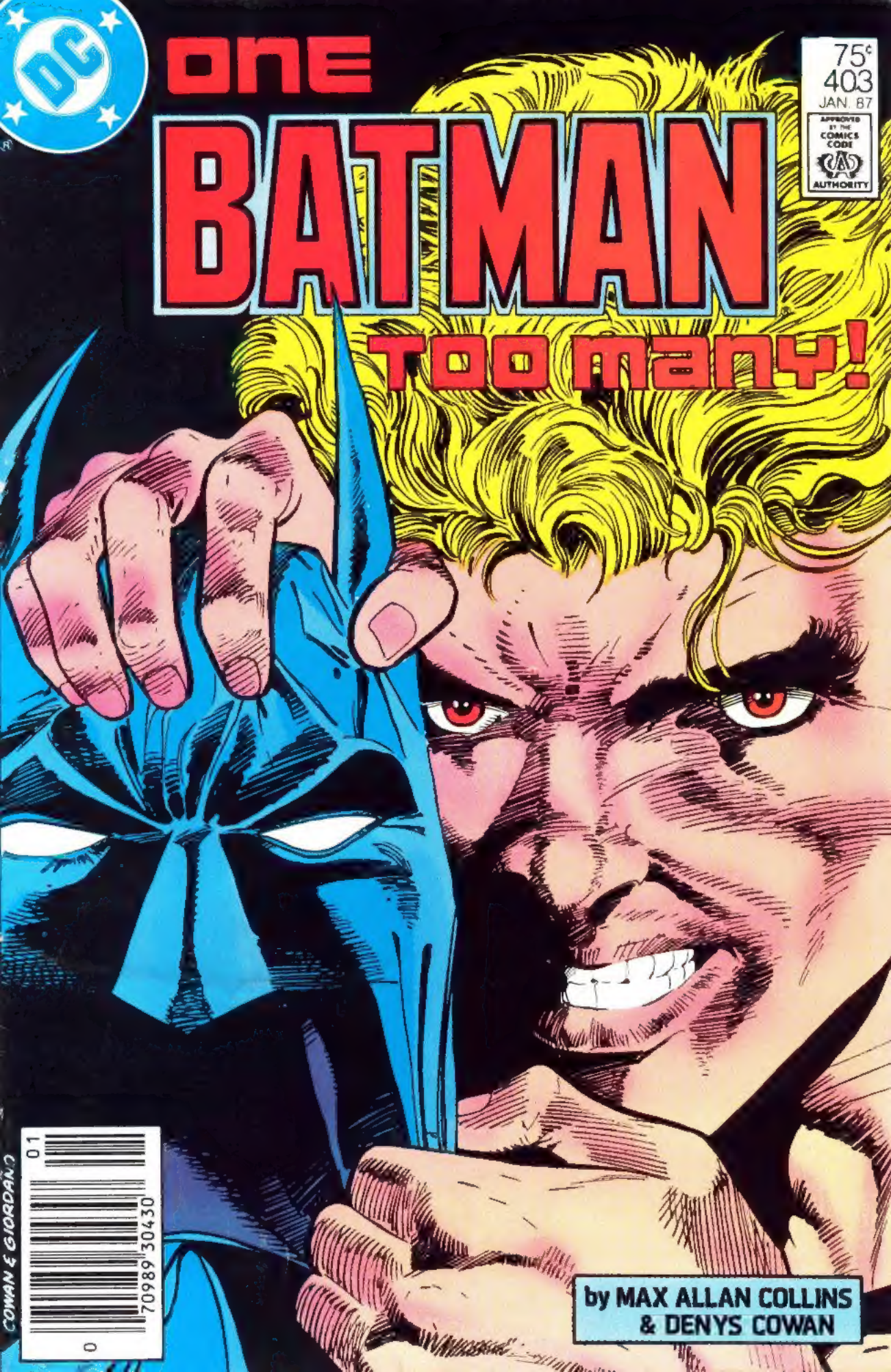
DC
ONE
BATMAN
TOO MANY!
75¢
403
JAN. 87
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
by MAX ALLAN COLLINS & DENYS COWAN
COWAN & GIORDANO
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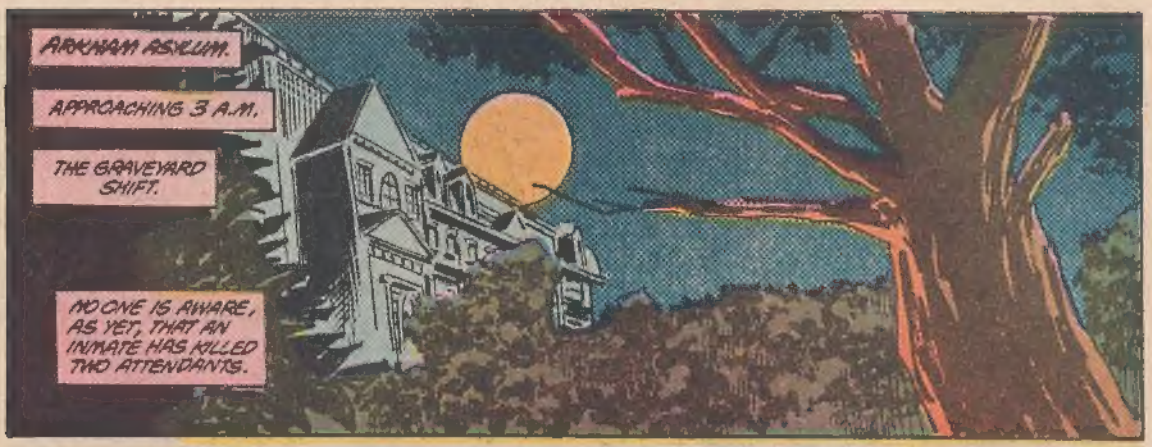
YOU NEVER EXPECTED ME TO GET THE LAST LAUGH, DID YOU, JOKER?
TAILS!
WHUMP!
I DIDN'T HAVE A COIN TO FLIP, TWO-FACE -- SO I FLIPPED YOU INSTEAD.
HOPE YOU DON'T MIND...
2

LET'S TRY AGAIN--
HEADS!
SMAK!
TOO BAD YOU'RE NOT STILL ALIVE, JOKER--
--THIS IS SO FUNNY IT WOULD KILL YOU!
AND IF YOU GENTLEMEN DON'T MIND...
...THE NIGHT AWAITS ME...



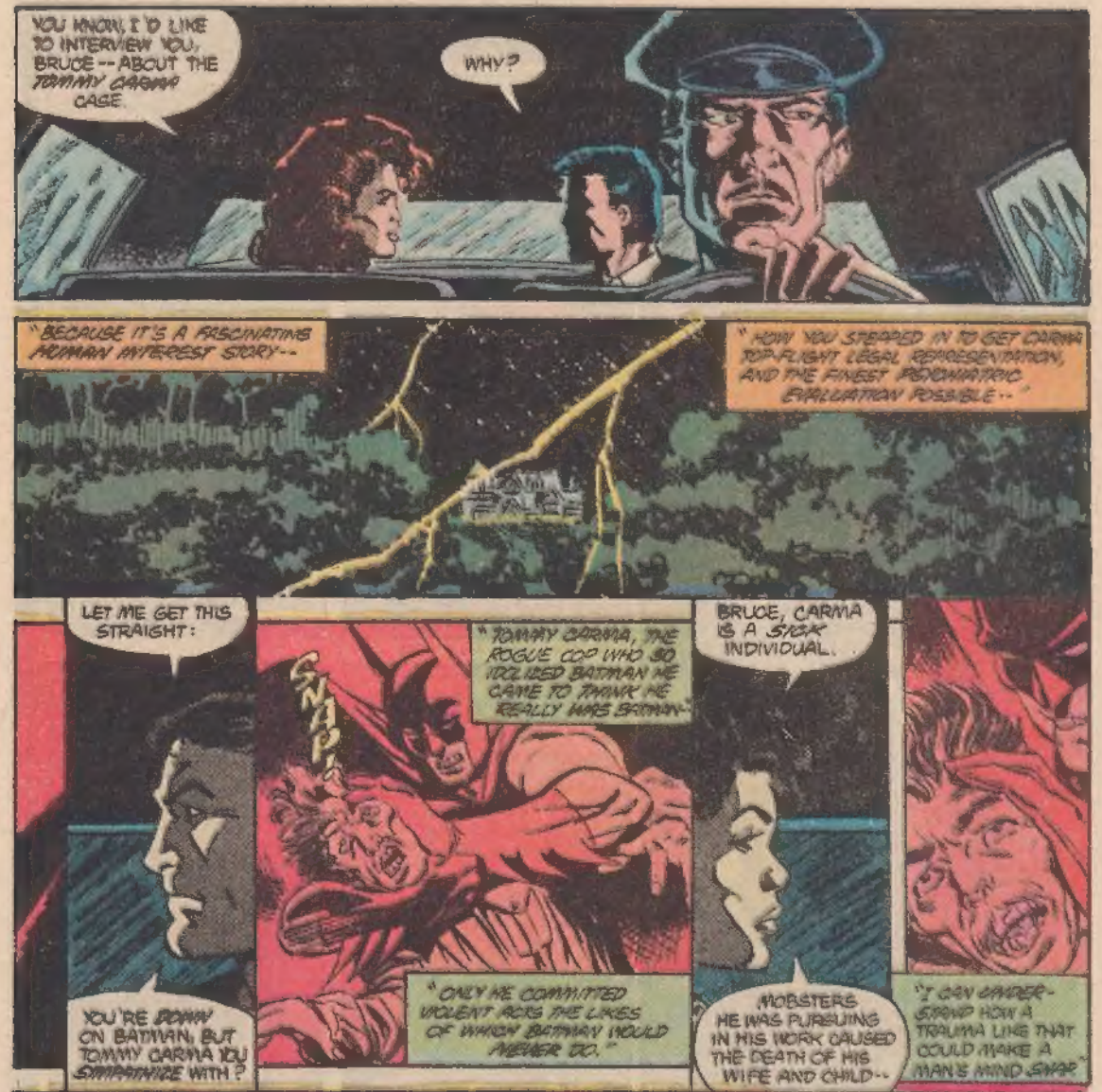
A SUCCESSION OF POWERFUL KICKS CAN TURN A WINDOW INTO A DOOR, WIRE MESH OR NOT--
KRUNCH!
KA-RUNCH!
BUT THIS DOOR OPENS ON A TEN-STORY STAIRWAY THAT ISN'T THERE...
...AND THAT FIRST STEP'S A KILLER--

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

AND WHEN THE NIGHT SKY CRACKS OPEN AND A STORM SHAKES THE WORLD...
KR-RAKKK!
HE ONLY FEELS AT HOME.
ELSEWHERE, A MILLIONAIRE WEATHERS ANOTHER STORM...
BRUCE, HOW CAN YOU DEFEND HIM?
HE'S A VIGILANTE!
...A MENACE!
VICKI, I THOUGHT YOU, WELL... ADMIRED BATMAN.
YOUR MAGAZINE CERTAINLY CHAMPIONED HIS CAUSE, ONCE UPON A TIME.
WELL, THAT WAS BEFORE I BECAME EDITOR.
AND WHEN I WAS AN IMPRESSIONABLE YOUNG GIRL, I DID FIND BATMAN A SORT OF...
...DASHING FIGURE.
BUT NOW YOU'RE A WOMAN AND YOU'VE PUT AWAY SUCH CHILDISH NOTIONS.
I SHOULD HOPE SO.
HOW CAN ANY RATIONAL PERSON ADMIRE A MAN WHO TAKES THE LAW INTO HIS OWN HANDS, WHILE HIDING BEHIND A MASK?
5

LAST CALL, SIR.
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW LATE IT WAS GETTING.
JUST BRING THE CHECK PLEASE.
SO THE DAYS WHEN VICKI VALE PURSUED BATMAN ARE OVER, HUH?
NOT AT ALL. HE'S STILL GOOD COPY.
HE'S JUST NOT MY IDEA OF A REAL MAN.
WHAT IS?
LOOK AT THIS BRAIN!
WHAT IS WHAT?
YOUR IDEA OF A "REAL" MAN?
YOU'RE REAL ENOUGH FOR ME, MR. WAYNE.
YOU HAVE BROAD SHOULDERS AND MILLIONS OF DOLLARS...
...AND YOU DON'T WEAR A MASK.
COME UP TO MY PLACE FOR A NIGHT CAP?
NOT TONIGHT.
JUST CAN'T.
RAIN CHECK?
6

HE RUNS THROUGH THE DARKNESS AND THE RAIN, WITH ONE GOAL IN MIND...
POLICE GYM
...WAYNE MANOR--
--WHERE HE CAN FIND THE ONE MAN WHO HAD COME TO HIS AID IN HIS TIME OF NEED, HIS HOUR OF DESPAIR.
HE KNOWS THE MANOR IS SOMEWHERE NEAR ARKHAM, OUT BEYOND THE EDGE OF THE CITY...
...BUT, KEEN AS HIS SENSES ARE, HE'S LOST ALL SENSE OF DIRECTION...
AND HE'S GETTING COLD.
THE RAIN IS CHILLING.
IF ONLY HE COULD FIND SOME TEMPORARY SHELTER--
A CAVE!
PERFECT... A LITTLE CAVE...
WHAT BATMAN WOULDN'T FEEL COZY IN SUCH A HIDEAWAY?

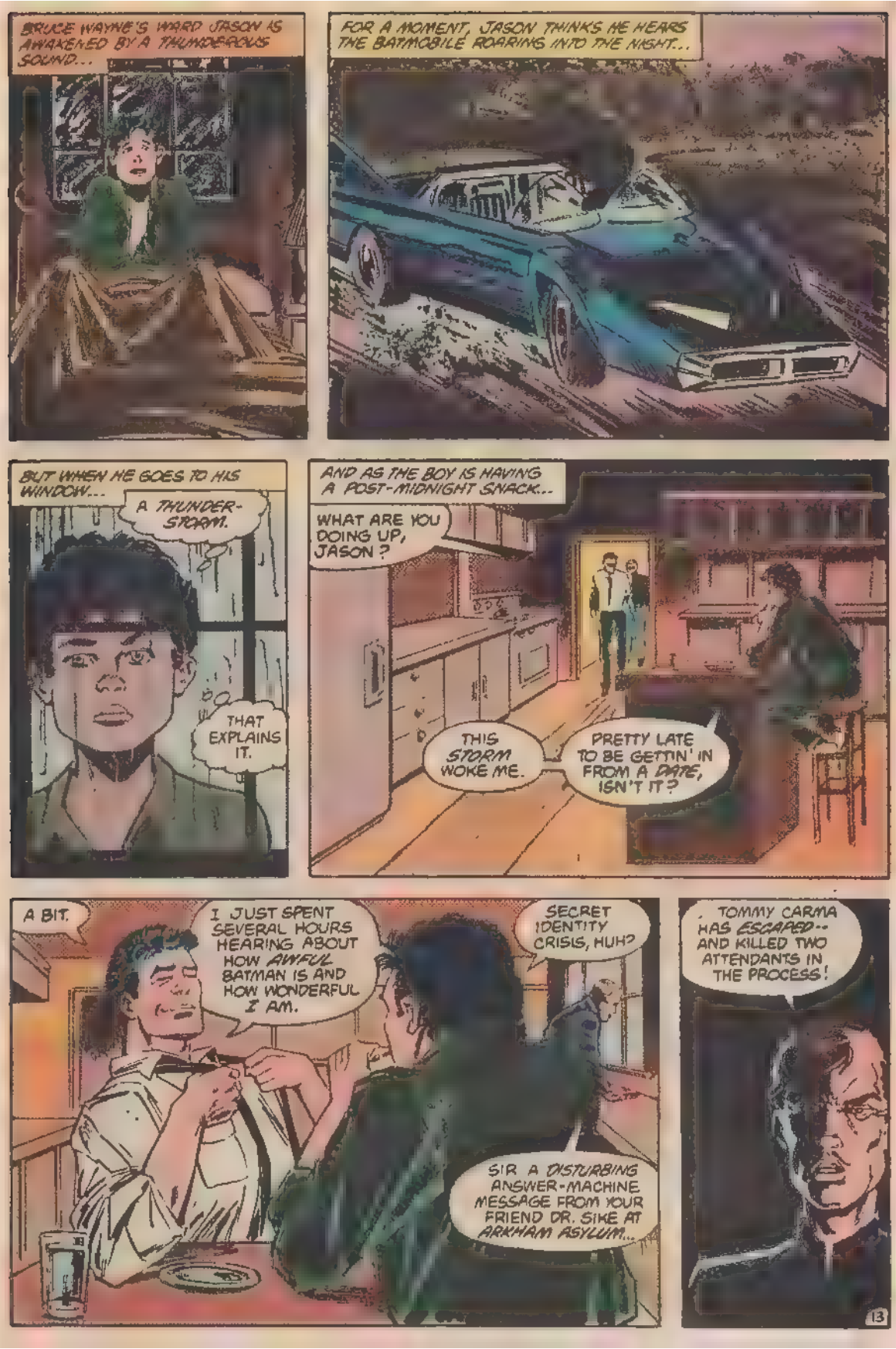

YOU KNOW, I'D LIKE TO INTERVIEW YOU, BRUCE -- ABOUT THE TOMMY CARMA CASE.
WHY?
"BECAUSE IT'S A FASCINATING HUMAN INTEREST STORY--
"HOW YOU STEPPED IN TO GET CARMA TOP-FLIGHT LEGAL REPRESENTATION, AND THE FINEST PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION POSSIBLE--"
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT:
"TOMMY CARMA, THE ROGUE COP WHO SO IDOLIZED BATMAN HE CAME TO THINK HE REALLY WAS BATMAN."
SNAP!
BRUCE, CARMA IS A SICK INDIVIDUAL.
YOU'RE DOWN ON BATMAN, BUT TOMMY CARMA YOU SYMPATHIZE WITH?
"ONLY HE COMMITTED VIOLENT ACTS THE LIKES OF WHICH BATMAN WOULD NEVER DO."
MOBSTERS HE WAS PURSUING IN HIS WORK CAUSED THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE AND CHILD--
"I CAN EASILY UNDERSTAND HOW A TRAUMA LIKE THAT COULD MAKE A MAN'S MIND SNAP."
HOW DO YOU KNOW THE REAL BATMAN DIDN'T SUFFER A SIMILAR TRAUMA?
HERE'S YOUR ARRAIGNMENT... I'LL WALK YOU UP--
8
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

MEN IN SLICKERS MOVE LIKE BLACK PATENT LEATHER GHOSTS THROUGH THE WOODED ROCKY AREA BEYOND THE ARKHAM ASYLUM GROUNDS--
SHERIFF, I DON'T KNOW IF WE SHOULD BE HERE--
WHY NOT?
WE'RE NOT ON THE ARKHAM GROUNDS ANY LONGER.
THIS LAND BELONGS TO THAT MILLIONAIRE, BRUCE WAYNE--
WE'RE CHASING A MURDERER, DEPUTY--
--AND I'M NOT WAITING AROUND FOR SOME PAMPERED PLAYBOY TO CLIMB OUT OF BED AND GIVE ME PERMISSION TO DO MY JOB!
WE'RE GOING TO KEEP AT THIS TILL WE FIND THIS PSYCHO--
--AND I WOULDN'T BE A BIT SURPRISED IF IT TOOK A FEW BULLETS TO STOP HIM.
9

FUNNY I REMEMBER A TIME WHEN BATMAN WAS A HERO TO YOU.
HE'S NOT A HERO HE'S A BRUTE
A FASCIST IN A RIDICULOUS COSTUME!
YOU -- YOU'RE A REAL HERO, BRUCE
YOU HAVE COMPASSION FOR THE TOMMY CARMAS OF THE WORLD
THINK OF THE HARM BATMAN'S DONE, WORKING OUTSIDE THE LAW.
THINK OF THE GOOD YOU'VE DONE, WORKING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH THE WAYNE FOUNDATION.
SO WHAT DOES THAT MAKE ME? A DEMOCRAT IN A TUX?
NEXT TIME LET'S NOT INVITE BATMAN ALONG WITH US WE'LL KEEP IT JUST THE TWO OF US.
SURE YOU DON'T WANT A NIGHT CAP?
SKREEE SKREEE SKREEE
"I REALLY DO HAVE TO GET HOME KICK
HE HAS FLED DEEP DEEP INTO THE CAVE, AWAY FROM THE MODERN-DAY POSSE PAST ITS GUNS
AND THE DARKNESS COMFORTS HIM
THAT AND THE OCCASIONAL SOUND OF FLAPPING WINGS.
A BAT CAVE
I'VE FOUND MY OWN BAT CAVE

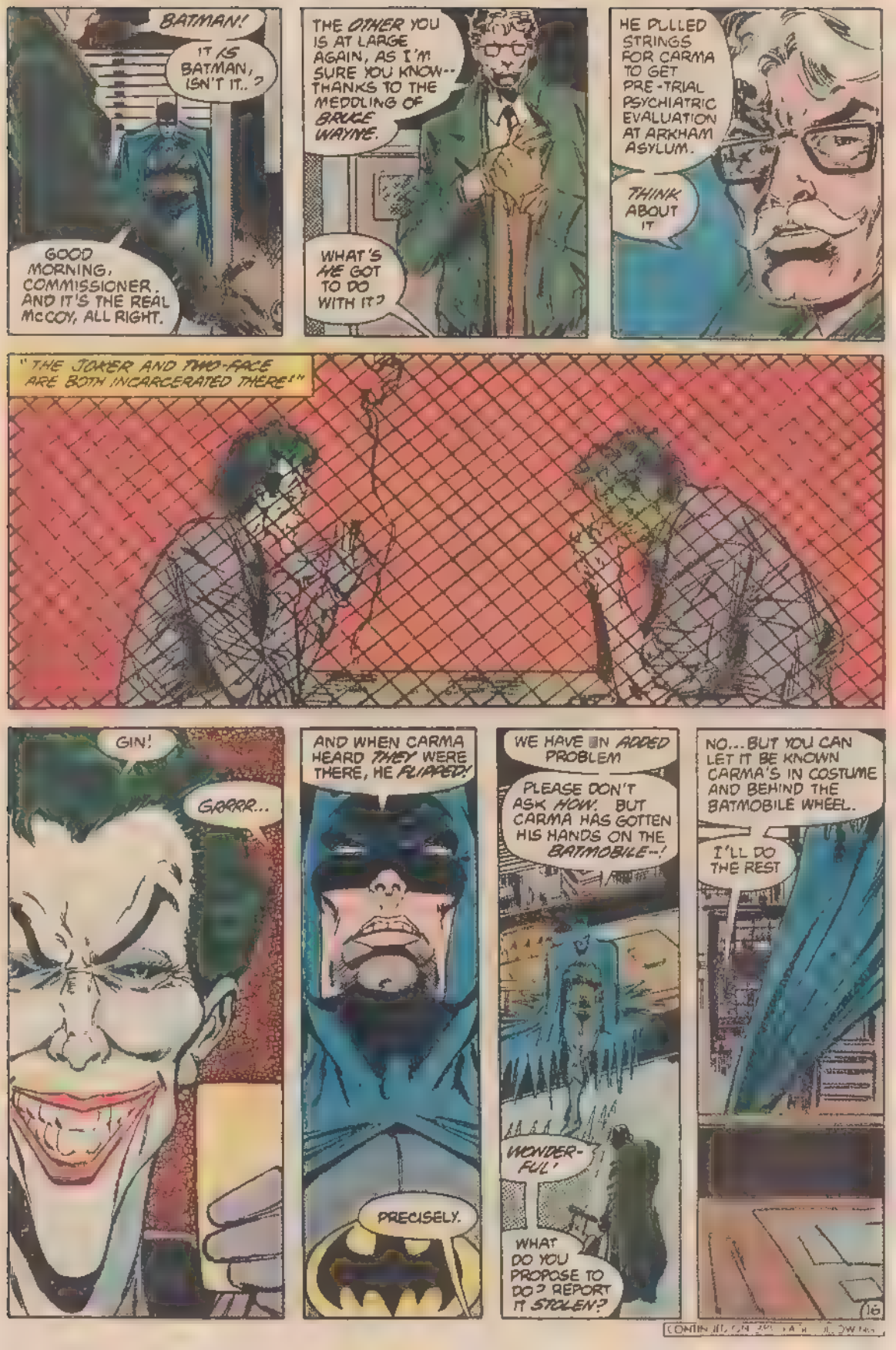
BUT AS HE MOVES DEEPER INTO THE CAVERN, FEELING ALONG COLD, MOISTURE-TOUCHED WALLS HE BECOMES PUZZLED--
A LIGHT SOURCE AHEAD-- BUT I'M DEEP UNDERGROUND--
--AND BEYOND THIS CAVERN THERE'S ONLY AIR!
HE FOLLOWS THE LIGHT--
POLICE GYM
--AND HE FINDS...
HIMSELF
I'M HOME!

THAT LUNATIC ASYLUM WHERE THE JOKER AND TWO-FACE IMPRISONED ME...
THEY MUST'VE USED DRUGS TO CLOUD AND CONFUSE MY MEMORY
BECAUSE I DON'T REMEMBER THIS PLACE.. NOT EXACTLY.
BUT IT'S OBVIOUSLY MY BASE OF OPERATIONS--
SURROUNDED BY TROPHIES OF MY TRIUMPHS I FEEL INVIGORATED!
LIBERTY
AND SO, TOMMY CARMA -- THE MAN WHO THINKS HE IS THE BATMAN-- EXPLORES HIS BAT CAVE...
YES!
NOW I'M ME AGAIN!
HOW I'VE MISSED YOU..
12

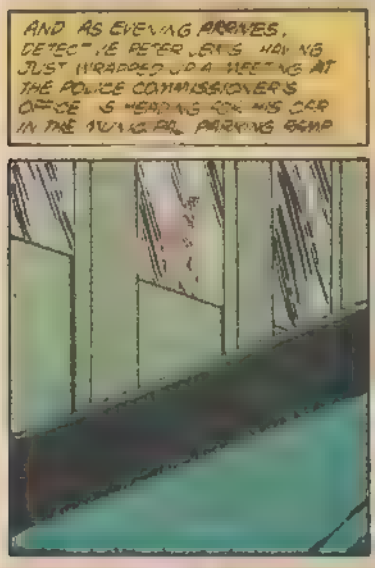

BRUCE WAYNE'S WARD JASON IS AWAKENED BY A THUNDEROUS SOUND...
FOR A MOMENT, JASON THINKS HE HEARS THE BATMOBILE ROARING INTO THE NIGHT...
BUT WHEN HE GOES TO HIS WINDOW...
A THUNDER-STORM.
THAT EXPLAINS IT.
AND AS THE BOY IS HAVING A POST-MIDNIGHT SNACK...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP, JASON?
THIS STORM WOKE ME.
PRETTY LATE TO BE GETTIN' IN FROM A DATE, ISN'T IT?
A BIT.
I JUST SPENT SEVERAL HOURS HEARING ABOUT HOW AWFUL BATMAN IS AND HOW WONDERFUL I AM.
SECRET IDENTITY CRISIS, HUH?
SIR A DISTURBING ANSWER-MACHINE MESSAGE FROM YOUR FRIEND DR. SIKE AT ARKHAM ASYLUM...
TOMMY CARMA HAS ESCAPED-- AND KILLED TWO ATTENDANTS IN THE PROCESS!
13

HE MAY BE IN THE AREA THE SHERIFF IS SEARCHING THE WOODS BETWEEN HERE AND ARKHAM
THE SHERIFF IS NO COMMIS-SIONER GORDON, BUT HE IS THOROUGH--
HOWEVER, IF I KNOW TOMMY CARMA, HE'LL HEAD FOR THE CITY!
HE HAS FRIENDS THERE--AND ENEMIES.
THE BATMOBILE!
WHERE IS IT?!
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU COULDA MISPLACED IT--
NO, AND I DIDN'T LEAVE IT IN A TOW-AWAY ZONE, EITHER...
--AND PLEASE, NO CRACKS ABOUT LEAVING THE KEYS IN THE IGN TION.
SO SOMEBODY'S BEEN IN HERE... BUT WHO? HOW?
I WAS HOME-- NOBODY CAME IN THROUGH THE HOUSE!
SIR I FOUND THESE WET THINGS NEAR YOUR WARDROBE--
THE INVENTORY OF WHICH IS SHY ONE UNIFORM--
"CITY POLICE GYM."
THAT CINCHES IT!
TOMMY CARMA
14

LOOK AT THESE
HE CAME IN OUT OF THE RAIN, THROUGH SOME PASSAGEWAY IN THE CATACOMB OF THESE CAVERNS.
YOU TH NK TOMMY CARMA CAME HERE ON PURPOSE?
YES AND NO
HE MAY HAVE CONS.DERED BRUCE WAYNE A ENEMY-- AND, TRYING TO MAKE HIS WAY TO WAYNE MANOR FROM ARKHAM, STUMBLED BY CHANCE INTO A CAVE CONNECTING WITH OURS
YOU STAY HERE, ROBIN, IN CASE CARMA RETURNS
IN THE MEANTIME I'M GOING AFTER OUR WOULD-BE BATMAN!
THROUGH THE RAIN AND THE NIGHT, BATMAN PROWLS THE ROADS AROUND ARKHAM AND WAYNE MANOR.
AND THE STREETS OF GOTHAM AS WELL UNTIL DAWN FILTERS BETWEEN THE CONCRETE TOMBSTONES OF THE CITY--
AT EIGHT A.M. COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON ARRIVES AT HIS OFFICE..


BATMAN!
IT IS BATMAN, ISN'T IT..?
GOOD MORNING, COMMISSIONER. AND IT'S THE REAL McCOY, ALL RIGHT.
THE OTHER YOU IS AT LARGE AGAIN, AS I'M SURE YOU KNOW-- THANKS TO THE MEDDLING OF BRUCE WAYNE.
WHAT'S HE GOT TO DO WITH IT?
HE PULLED STRINGS FOR CARMA TO GET PRE-TRIAL PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION AT ARKHAM ASYLUM.
THINK ABOUT IT
"THE JOKER AND TWO-FACE ARE BOTH INCARCERATED THERE!"
GIN!
GRRRR...
AND WHEN CARMA HEARD THEY WERE THERE, HE FLIPPED!
PRECISELY.
WE HAVE AN ADDED PROBLEM
PLEASE DON'T ASK HOW. BUT CARMA HAS GOTTEN HIS HANDS ON THE BATMOBILE--!
WONDER-FUL!
WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE TO DO? REPORT IT STOLEN?
NO...BUT YOU CAN LET IT BE KNOWN CARMA'S IN COSTUME AND BEHIND THE BATMOBILE WHEEL.
I'LL DO THE REST
16

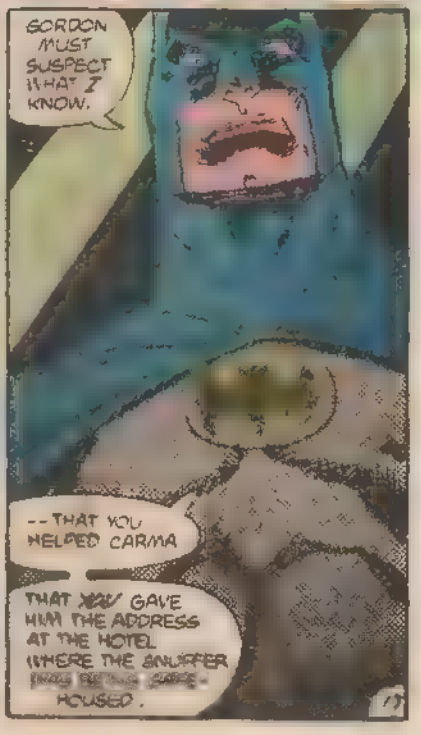
IN THE UNDERWORLD DISTRICT OF A BIG CITY, A SHADOWY FIGURE THINKS CARMA HAS TO BE EARNED
THE MAN WE KNOW AS BATMAN SLEEPS A FEW SHORT HOURS FOR THE NIGHT


AND AS EVENING ARRIVES, DETECTIVE PETER LEWIS HAVING JUST WRAPPED UP A MEETING AT THE POLICE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE IS HEADING FOR HIS CAR IN THE MUNICIPAL PARKING GARAGE

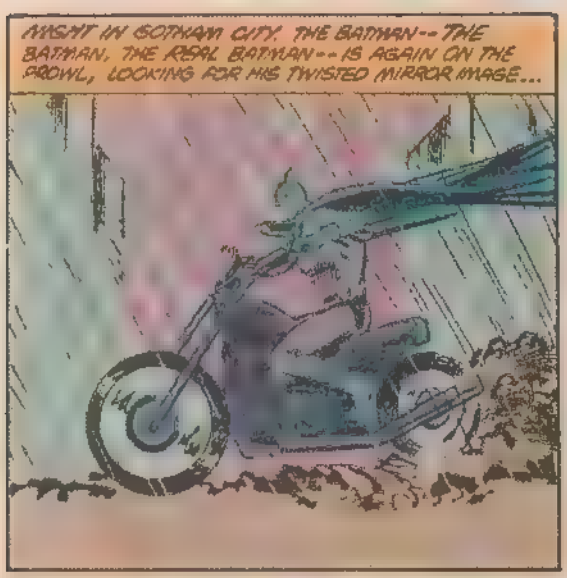
PETE!
TOMMY?

NO--NOT TOMMY!
I'M THE REAL THING--AND I DON'T MEAN COCA COLA
JEEZ! THE BATMAN!

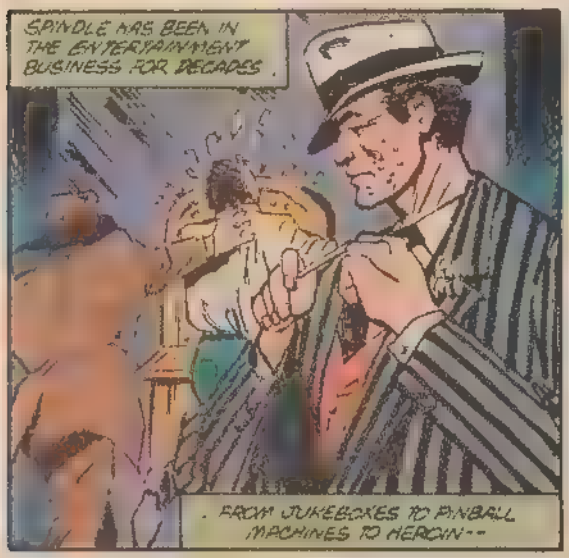
YOU'VE BEEN UP TO SEE THE COMMISSIONER ABOUT YOUR BROTHER, HAVEN'T YOU, DETECTIVE LEWIS?
Y-YEAH SO?

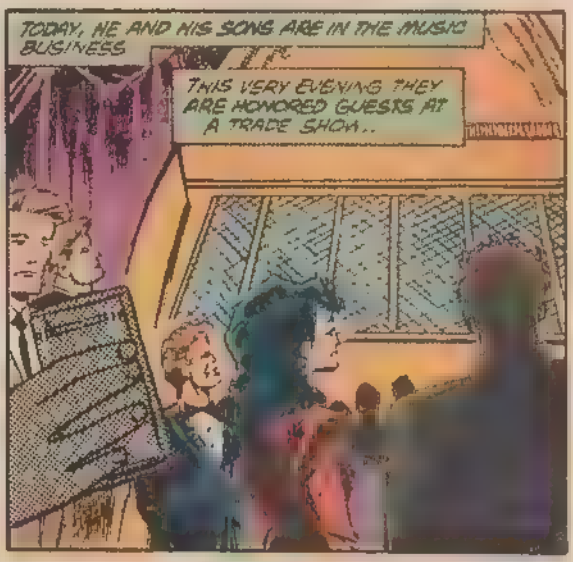

GORDON MUST SUSPECT WHAT I KNOW.
--THAT YOU HELPED CARMA
THAT YOU GAVE HIM THE ADDRESS AT THE HOTEL WHERE THE SNUFFER [illegible] HOUSED.

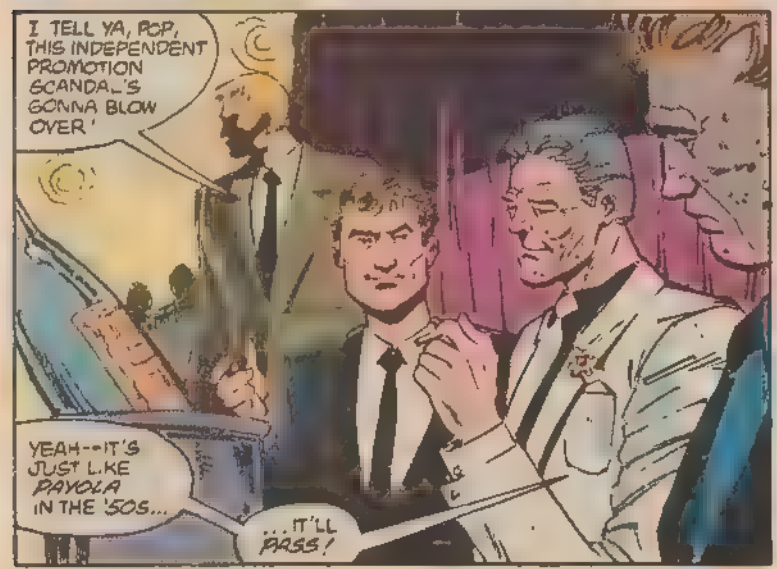
THAT LOUSY HITMAN KILLED TOMMY'S WIFE AND KID!
IF I DID HELP TOMMY GET TO HIM, IT WAS NO SIN--
MAYBE!
BUT IT WAS A CRIME-- THE KIND YOU CAN LOSE YOUR BADGE OVER, DETECTIVE.
TOMMY WAS MY PARTNER, AND MY FRIEND!
HE'S NOBODY'S FRIEND, NOW.
HE'S GONE SO FAR 'ROUND THE BEND HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHO HE'S KILLING!
YEAH I KNOW
THOSE HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS.. THAT'S A SHAME
TOMMY HAS TO BE STOPPED.
FUNNY HE JUST WANTED TO BE LIKE YOU--
--IF HE HADN'T IDOLIZED YOU, HE'D HAVE MADE A FINE COP.
"BUT HE'D BRACE HOODS KNOCK 'EM AROUND, COLLOM WAS CARED LESS ABOUT PROCEDURE AND CIVIL LIBERTIES--
--AND, SO, A LOT OF GOOD BUSTS WENT DOWN THE TUBES, ACCORDINGLY
YOU KNOW TOMMY LIKE NOBODY ELSE, LEWIS.
WHERE DO YOU THINK HE'LL STRIKE NEXT?
WELL, WE WERE WORKIN' UP A CASE AGAINST LOU SPINDLE
SPINDLE IS THE LOWLIFE SLIME WHO MORE 'N' LIKELY TOOK OUT THAT CONTRACT ON TOMMY-- WHICH BACKFIRED AND TOOK OUT TOMMY'S WIFE AND KID INSTEAD.

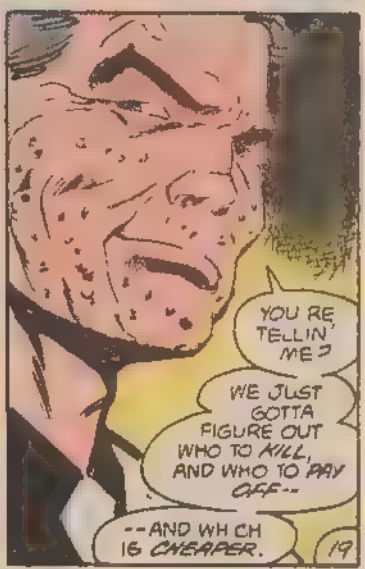

MIGHT IN GOTHAM CITY. THE BATMAN -- THE BATMAN, THE REAL BATMAN -- IS AGAIN ON THE PROWL, LOOKING FOR HIS TWISTED MIRROR IMAGE...

MEET LOU SPINDLE. A SELF-PROCLAIMED, SELF-STYLED BUSINESSMAN
TO THE BATMAN, SPINDLE IS A GANGSTER -- A GANGSTER THE BATMAN HATES NEARLY AS MUCH AS TOMMY CARMA DOES.


SPINDLE HAS BEEN IN THE ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS FOR DECADES.
. FROM JUKEBOXES TO PINBALL MACHINES TO HEROIN --


TODAY, NE AND HIS SONS ARE IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS.
THIS VERY EVENING THEY ARE HONORED GUESTS AT A TRADE SHOW..

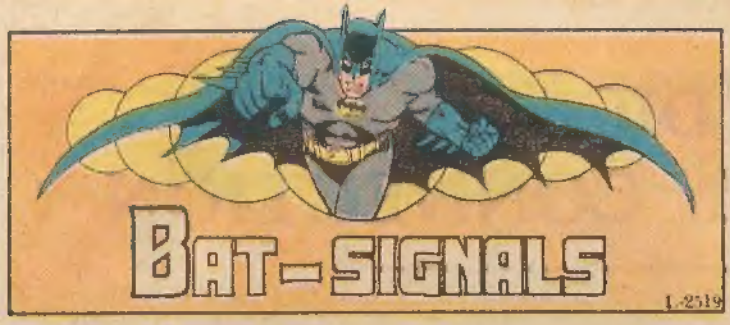

I TELL YA, POP, THIS INDEPENDENT PROMOTION SCANDAL'S GONNA BLOW OVER!
YEAH -- IT'S JUST LIKE PAYOLA IN THE '50S...
...IT'LL PASS!


YOU RE TELLIN' ME?
WE JUST GOTTA FIGURE OUT WHO TO KILL, AND WHO TO PAY OFF --
-- AND WH CH IS CHEAPER.

SPINDLE!
YOU'VE AVOIDED JUSTICE LONG ENOUGH!
HOW I'VE MISSED YOU...
PLEASE DON'T SHOOT..

DON'T SHOOT!
YOU'LL HIT...
...ME...
W-WHAT...?
W-WHO...?
COME ON, TOMMY.
COME QUIETLY, PLEASE.
21

IMPOSTER!
YOU SURE PACK A BATMAN-STYLE PUNCH, TOMMY...
LET'S SEE HOW YOU TAKE ONE--!
SMAK
SMAK
N-NOBODY CAN DEFEAT THE BATMAN...
VICKI VALE MAY THINK THAT THE BATMAN AND BRUCE WAYNE ARE TWO VERY DIFFERENT PEOPLE...
THAT'S RIGHT, TOMMY--
--AND YOU'RE NOT HIM!
BUT THE AVENGER WITHIN THE BATMAN CO-EXISTS WITH THE COMPASSIONATE MAN.
LET'S GO, SON.
LET'S SET YOU SOME HELP.
BATMAN IS INDEED TWO MEN...
...AND BOTH ARE BRUCE WAYNE.
THE END



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FROM THE DEN

Sometimes it just happens. Sometimes I do nothing at all and everything comes together anyway, and I feel more like a magician than an editor.

Case in point: last issue. My problem was that I needed a couple of very special stories to put in BATMAN 402 and 403. These would lead into what we think will be one of the events of this already incredible comics year, BATMAN: YEAR ONE, by Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli. I felt we had to prepare the readers by giving them stories that established the intensity, the dark moods and stern morality that Miller and Mazzucchelli always bring to their work. Now, while talent abounds in the corridors of DC, it isn't easy to find people who can create the kind of material I wanted. You don't get them by just whistling. I was verbalizing my dilemma (okay, I was moaning aloud) when fellow senior editor and office mate Mike Gold said that his old friend Max Allan Collins had always wanted to try his talents on The Dark Knight.

I knew about those talents. I'd been reading the Collins version of *Dick Tracy* in the newspapers for almost ten years and, more recently, friends turned me on to *Ms. Tree*, a comic book done by Collins and Terry Beatty. I thought both strips excellent, and both embodied some of the qualities I was looking for. So I phoned Max at his Iowa home and made him an offer. To my delight, he said he was, indeed, anxious to do a BATMAN script, would begin it immediately and—o joy! o hallelujah!—he ended this splendid conversation by saying my deadline was no problem whatever.

I had a writer, but that was only a third of my team. Where were my penciller and inker coming from? The phone rang. The caller was Jim Starlin and—could I *believe* it?—he was seeking work. He wanted a break from the kind of philosophical science-fantasy he'd been doing in *Dreadstar* for the past couple of years. Something a bit more down to Earth. Something in the Batman line, maybe. Pencils *and* inks. Deadline would be no problem. So there it was: a writer I deeply admired and one of comics' most respected artists asking if they could please do exactly what I wanted done exactly when I needed it. I clasped my hands behind my head, leaned way back in my chair and smiled: sometimes editors' dreams *do* come true.

You hold in your hands the *second* Collins BATMAN. Some might say it's a sequel. But I wouldn't agree. I think of it as a further exploration of the same theme, using the same characters. But hey, labels don't matter. What's important is that Max has given us another fine, moody adventure with a little something to mull over thrown in. The artist? One of our brightest newcomers making his BATMAN debut, Denys Cowan.

Next issue, BATMAN: YEAR ONE. Meanwhile, if you can handle a bit more of the Caped Crusader, I suggest you check out the current DETECTIVE. The new regular team, Mike W. Barr, Alan Davis and Paul Neary, are doing in their way what Collins and Starlin (and Miller and Mazzucchelli) are doing in theirs—taking the Batman into all the darknesses there are.

Denny

THE DICK TRACY/ BATMAN CONNECTION

Part Two: The Galleries of Grotesques

by Max Allan Collins

Several years ago, long before I had any notion I'd ever get a chance to contribute to BATMAN, I received a phone call from Bob Kane, who wanted to chat about a mutual interest of ours: the DICK TRACY comic strip.

I'd been scripting TRACY for perhaps three years when Kane called. If memory serves me right, he wanted an example of the Rick Fletcher/Max Collins TRACY for his original art collection. At any rate, we discussed TRACY and BATMAN, and Kane copped gladly to being a big fan of Chester Gould and cited him as the major influence on his BATMAN art style.

Prior to influx of the likes of Neal Adams, Dick Giordano, Jim Aparo, and Irv Novick into the BATMAN of the mid-'60s, Kane's Gould-influenced style dominated BATMAN, no matter who was actually drawing it. Some of the ghost artists had difficulty maintaining that cartoony approach, and on occasion square-jawed Batman and elfin, round-faced Robin would wander through otherwise realistically drawn tales like strangers in their own comic book.

Usually, however, the artists managed to maintain a Kane-like quality, with the prime performer being (in this writer's opinion) the superbly stylish Dick Sprang. Sprang especially went to town with Batman's fiendish foes—his often nameless, square-shouldered, fedora-topped, zoot-suited thugs were Caligari-like caricatures of Warner Brothers heavies; and his Joker was a character charged with both menace and mirth.

Kane and writer Bill Finger, however, must be credited with the creation of the Joker, that most famous and memorable of Batman's opponents. The Joker and other recurring villains—the Penguin, Two-Face, Catwoman and the Riddler—have become almost as famous as Batman himself. Like the grotesque gallery of Gould ghouls, Batman's rogues' gallery has threatened at times to overshadow the very hero of the strip.

While Bob Kane admits that BATMAN was to a degree a costumed version of DICK TRACY, it is unfair to suggest that the larger-than-life villains in the former derive from the latter. In fact, the Joker predates most of TRACY's grotesque foes; prior to the appearance of the Mole in 1941, Gould's villains had been primarily gangsters and outlaws patterned after the Capones and Dillingers of the day. Even Flattop himself—who appeared in 1944, and really ushered in the era of larger-than-life, "crazy" villains in TRACY—was patterned upon real-life outlaw "Pretty Boy" Floyd.

On the other hand, the villains in BATMAN probably did not influence Chester Gould. Gould was an original. He lived a somewhat isolated life and was a creative thinker who drew upon headlines and the world around him, not other writers and artists, for his inspiration. That Gould's villain Haf-and-Haf resembles Two-Face is, I believe, sheer coincidence. Had Chet been aware of Two-Face, who pre-dated Haf-and-Haf by a good many years, he would never have done so similar a character.

Superstar bad guys have been born with astonishing regularity in both BATMAN and DICK TRACY. A major difference in TRACY has been the tendency for villains not to reappear. This may have something to do with the slightly more realistic approach of TRACY, which, despite Gould's larger-than-life art and characters, has always been a police procedural story at heart. BATMAN, despite its crime and detective story roots, remains a part of the super-hero genre. It seems, somehow, natural for the likes of a Joker or Penguin or Two-Face to come back again and again to taunt and haunt our hero; that's part of the super-hero fantasy—that super-villains occupy an equal opposite place in that way-larger-than-life world.

But Gould wanted to punish his bad guys with a gruesome finality; Tracy was a morality play in which crime was an ugly thing (like the villains themselves) which required fiendish deaths for fiendish foes. This may have been a mistake. Killing off a character as rich (and popular) as Flattop is something of a waste. How many Flattops can even a genius like Chester Gould create in a lifetime? Actually, he created a remarkable gallery of foes for his square-jawed detective, a number of whom rivaled Flattop in popularity and effectiveness; but he also created many lesser ones, and some who were downright unmemorable. He tried on two occasions (rather successfully) to summon the spirit of Flattop, first by creating Flattop's brother, Blowtop; second by introducing a juvenile delinquent son, Flattop, Jr.

I introduced, in my first TRACY story, Flattop's daughter Angeltop (since deceased herself, but after three continuities). This may indicate the influence of BATMAN on my work. One of the characteristics of my version of TRACY has been my efforts to bring back memorable villains. This includes those who Gould somehow neglected to kill off (Haf-and-Haf, for one) and others who Gould killed ambiguously enough for me to revive (Mumbles). For example, in 1942, Gould froze Pruneface to death; so in 1988, I cryogenically thawed him out. I have even done one flashback story involving Flattop (flashing back before his death, obviously).

It always frustrated me, as a TRACY fan (who was quite used to seeing BATMAN's villains recur), that these great grotesques should disappear after one appearance. As the writer of TRACY, I have been far less cavalier about killing off my own villains. You never know when you're going to come up with a Flattop or Joker.